



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

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News Release

Three plead guilty in international human smuggling ring; young Honduran women required to work in Hudson County bars

TRENTON, NJ—Three people pleaded guilty today, all members of a ring operating in the United States and Honduras that smuggled young Honduran women into the U.S. and required them to work off their smuggling debts in bars in Hudson County, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Noris Elvira Rosales Martinez, 29, of Union City, Ana Luz Rosales Martinez, 38, of Union City and Jose Dimas Magana, 40 of Union City, entered guilty pleas to violations of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000; specifically one count of conspiracy to commit forced labor, one count of forced labor, and one count of harboring illegal aliens.

“Human trafficking and forced labor violates human rights we hold sacred,” said Christie. “It represents a level of greed and indecency that we will not tolerate in New Jersey.”

The defendants each admitted that between 2003 and 2005, they were involved in a conspiracy to recruit young females from Honduras, some as young as 14, and to illegally smuggle them into the United States and harbor them in Hudson County where they were required to work in various bars until they worked off their smuggling debts ranging from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

The Rosales sisters had themselves been smuggled into the United States in the late 1990s. Upon their arrival, they worked at the Puerta De La Union II and the Havana Club bars in Union City.

It was while they worked at the Havana Club that the Rosales sisters encountered two minor Honduran girls that the Rosales sisters knew had been smuggled into the United States. In 2004, the Rosales sisters and the two juvenile women worked at El Paisano bar in Union city and the Rosales sisters became involved in smuggling themselves.

Beginning late in 2004, Noris Elvira Rosales Martinez handled the smuggling arrangements from the United States. Part of those arrangements to bring the women into the United States involved smugglers commonly known as “coyotes,” who brought the women from Honduras through Guatemala and into Mexico. From Mexico the women would travel to Texas, where they would meet up with Elsa Isuala Meza, stay with her for a few days, and then continue their trip to the New Jersey area. Elsa Isuala Meza pleaded guilty on Jan. 20 2006 to harboring charges and is scheduled to be sentenced this fall.

Jose Dimas Magana admitted that once the women arrived in the New Jersey area, he and the Rosales sisters would pick up the women and bring them to one of three apartments, located at 2604 New York Avenue, Union City; and 509 22nd Street, Union City; and 75 68th Street, Guttenberg (collectively “the apartments”), where the women were required to live until their smuggling debts were repaid.

Jose Dimas Magana admitted that the women were physically hit and threatened with physical harm. These physical threats and abuses were also peppered with threats to call immigration authorities if the women did not pay the debts. Some of the women were told that they were not free to leave the apartments without permission or to stop working at the bars until the debt was paid.

The defendants also admitted that they created an environment in which the victims believed they would be deported if they did not do as they were told and would risk physical harm if they were deported back to Honduras before paying off their debts.

The women were required by the defendants to work six days a week from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. for \$240 per week plus tips at one of three bars – El Paisano Bar, Puerto De La Union I and Puerto De La Union II all located in Union City. The women, including the juveniles who were given false identification, were required to get the male patrons to buy beer, even if that meant the women would have to drink beer and dance with the patrons at a cost of \$3 per dance. Jose Dimas Magana admitted that, at times, he and others escorted the women to and from the apartments and the bars.

Perhaps the most abominable acts that occurred, as recounted by co-defendants Xochil Nectalina Rosales Martinez and Jose Nahun Rosales Martinez, at their plea hearings that they as “enforcers” of the house rules at the 68th Street apartment stood by as one of the women was forced to ingest medication to abort her child. The woman was told she could not live in the apartment or work at the bar if she was pregnant. Tragically the young woman went into labor and delivered a baby girl who died.

The conspiracy to commit forced labor carries a statutory maximum prison sentence of five years. The forced labor count carries a statutory maximum prison sentence of 20 years. The harboring charge carries a statutory maximum prison sentence of 10 years. All three violations carry a statutory maximum fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross amount of any pecuniary gain that any persons derived from the offense.

Elvira Rosales Martinez faces a probable sentencing range of between 78 and 97 months in federal prison under the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines; Ana Rosales Martinez and Jose Dimas Magana both face a probable sentencing range of between 57 and 71 months when they are sentenced by U.S. District Judge Joel A. Pisano on Dec. 18.

Judge Pisano has wide discretion in imposing sentence and can sentence within the range or above or below the range.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Ronald D. Wigler, Camelia M. Valdes and Deborah J. Gannett of the U.S. Attorney’s Office in New Jersey, Newark Office. This case is the result of an investigation conducted by agents of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Newark, under Special Agent-in-Charge, Kyle Hutchins; and the U.S. Department of Labor, Office

of Inspector General, under the direction of Inspector General Gordon S. Heddell; the Guttenberg Police Department, under the direction of Public Safety Director Nicholas Lordo; ICE Honduras Attaché Roberto Alvarez; ICE investigator Alba R. Mejia; the General Prosecutor of the Republic of Honduras, and the Special Investigation Police in Honduras.

ICE

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